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LRAPA applauds the City of Cottage Grove's tree branch pickup program

To the Editor of Cottage Grove Sentinel,

The Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) applauds the City of Cottage Grove's tree branch pickup program in response to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic affecting our community. The program, which ran from April 21st to May 22nd for yard debris drop off and two days in May for home pickup, is an example of effective government action for the benefit of all city residents.

Each spring, many burn yard debris and overgrowth in preparation of summer when such growth would become a fire hazard. This year, the presence of the coronavirus pandemic – a respiratory infection – poised two public health crises against each other. The public health concern of smoke impacting those suffering from COVID-19, and the need to remove debris ahead of hot and dry weather.

LRAPA, in addition to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office (OSFM), Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) asked Oregonians to voluntarily refrain from outdoor burning.

In response the City of Cottage Grove implemented a tree branch pickup program, solving both public health crises with a singular effort. Landowners could remove yard debris without introducing smoke into the airshed that may negatively impact their neighbors. The program, from LRAPA's perspective, was a success. Our agency wishes to applaud and recognize the City of Cottage Grove's quick and efficient efforts which positively impacted the community.

– Lane Regional Air Protection Agency